

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace any/all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1. (Currently Amended) A process for reducing acrylamide production from a reaction of free asparagine and sugars in a cooked, starch based processed food, the process comprising: which comprises:

(a) adding a raw, uncooked processed food comprising asparagine and sugars ~~comprising to~~ a fermenter with an outlet strainer for straining the fermented food, the fermenter containing an a fluid aqueous medium having a pH between about 4 and 8, the aqueous medium comprising

(i) a microorganism used for food fermentations for metabolizing sugars in the uncooked processed food,

(ii) added yeast extract for fermentation by [[a]] the microorganism,

(iii) at least one of a food-grade acid or an alkali metal hydroxide; used for food fermentations in the aqueous medium at a pH between about 4 and 8, produced by an addition of a food-grade acid or an alkali metal hydroxide to the aqueous medium, for metabolizing the sugars in the uncooked processed food in the fermenter;

(b) fermenting the uncooked processed food in the aqueous medium which is agitated in the fermenter with the microorganism so as to ferment the sugars in the uncooked processed food sufficiently to reduce the acrylamide production upon cooking of the uncooked processed food;

(c) removing the aqueous medium from the uncooked processed food in the fermenter through the outlet strainer;

(d) washing the uncooked processed food from step (c) in the fermenter by introducing water to remove residues on the uncooked processed food from the fermentation through the outlet strainer; and

(e) baking or frying the uncooked processed food, ~~wherein the thereby~~ forming a fermented and cooked food that contains less acrylamide than without the fermentation; [[.]]

wherein no sugars are added to the processed food through steps (a) to (e).

2. (Currently Amended) The process of Claim 1 wherein ~~the aqueous medium consists of~~ the yeast extract ~~which is introduced in dry form into the aqueous medium to enable the fermentation of the sugars by the microorganism.~~

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Currently Amended) The process of ~~any one of Claims 1, 2 or 3~~ Claim 1 or 2 wherein the aqueous medium for the fermentation is at a temperature between about 10 and 40°C and a pH between about 4 and 5.

5. (Cancelled)

6. (Currently Amended) The process of ~~any one of Claims 1, 2 or 3~~ Claim 1 or 2 wherein step (e) comprises frying the uncooked processed food ~~is cooked by being fried~~.

7. (Currently Amended) The process of ~~any one of Claims 1, 2 or 3~~ Claim 1 or 2 wherein step (e) comprises baking the uncooked processed food ~~is cooked by being baked~~ in an oven.

8. (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 1 wherein the cooked food is selected from the group consisting of potato chips, tortilla chips, pretzels, crackers, baked goods, fried breads, processed cereals and French fries.

9. (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 1 wherein the aqueous medium is recirculated into and out of the fermenter while retaining the food in the fermenter.

10. (Currently Amended) The process of ~~any one of Claims 1, 2 or 3~~, Claim 1 or 2 wherein the microorganism is a yeast.

11. (Currently Amended) The process of ~~any one of Claims 1, 2 or 3~~ Claim 1 or 2 wherein the microorganism is a bacterium.

12. (Currently Amended) The process of ~~any one of Claims 1, 2 or 3~~ Claim 1 or 2 wherein the microorganism is a lactic acid producing microorganism.

13. (Currently Amended) The process of Claim 1 wherein the microorganism is recycled between batches of the uncooked processed food which are processed in the fermentation fermenter.

14. (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 1 wherein the pH of the aqueous medium is adjusted prior to the fermentation.

15. (Cancelled)

16. (Original) The process of Claim 1 wherein at the end of the fermenting the aqueous medium has a pH between about 4 and 5.

17. (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 1 wherein the uncooked processed food is dried after the fermentation and before the cooking in step (e).

18. (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 1 wherein water provided in the aqueous medium in step (a) is distilled or otherwise purified.

19. (Currently Amended) The process of Claim 1 wherein the uncooked processed food is potato slices.

20. (New) A process for reducing acrylamide production from a reaction of free asparagine and sugars in a cooked, starch based processed food, the process comprising:

(a) adding a raw, uncooked processed food comprising asparagine and sugars to a fermenter with an outlet strainer for straining fermented food, the fermenter containing an aqueous medium having a pH between about 4 and 5, the aqueous medium comprising

(i) a microorganism used for food fermentations for metabolizing sugars in the uncooked processed food,

(ii) yeast extract for fermentation by the microorganism,

(iii) at least one of a food-grade acid or an alkali metal hydroxide;

(b) fermenting the uncooked processed food in the aqueous medium which is agitated in the fermenter with the microorganism so as to ferment the sugars in the uncooked processed food sufficiently to reduce the acrylamide production upon cooking of the uncooked processed food;

(c) removing the aqueous medium from the uncooked processed food in the fermenter through the outlet strainer;

(d) washing the uncooked processed food from step (c) in the fermenter by introducing water to remove residues on the uncooked processed food from the fermentation through the outlet strainer; and

(e) baking or frying the uncooked processed food, thereby forming a fermented and cooked food that contains less acrylamide than without the fermentation;

wherein no sugars are added to the processed food through steps (a) to (e).

21. (New) The process of Claim 20 wherein the cooked food is selected from the group consisting of potato chips, tortilla chips, pretzels, crackers, baked goods, fried breads, processed cereals and French fries.

22. (New) The process of Claim 20 wherein the uncooked processed food is potato slices.

23. (New) The process of Claim 20 wherein the microorganism is a yeast.

24. (New) The process of Claim 20 wherein the microorganism is a lactic acid producing microorganism.

25. (New) The process of Claim 20 wherein at the end of the fermenting the aqueous medium has a pH between about 4 and 5.

26. (New) The process of Claim 1 wherein the uncooked processed food added in step (a) comprises less than 0.1 wt.% glucose.

27. (New) The process of Claim 1 wherein the uncooked processed food added in step (a) comprises less than 0.1 wt.% fructose.

28. (New) A process for reducing acrylamide production from a reaction of free asparagine and sugars in a cooked, starch based processed food, the process comprising:

(a) adding a raw, uncooked processed food comprising asparagine, sugars, and less than 0.1 wt.% fructose to a fermenter containing an aqueous medium having a pH between about 4 and 8, the aqueous medium comprising

(i) a microorganism used for food fermentations for metabolizing sugars in the uncooked processed food,

(ii) yeast extract for fermentation by the microorganism,

(iii) at least one of a food-grade acid or an alkali metal hydroxide;

(b) fermenting the uncooked processed food in the aqueous medium which is agitated in the fermenter with the microorganism so as to ferment the sugars in the uncooked processed food sufficiently to reduce the acrylamide production upon cooking of the uncooked processed food; and

(c) baking or frying the uncooked processed food, thereby forming a fermented and cooked food that contains less acrylamide than without the fermentation;

wherein no sugars are added to the processed food through steps (a) to (c).

29. (New) A process for reducing acrylamide production from a reaction of free asparagine and sugars in a cooked, starch based processed food, the process comprising:

(a) adding a raw, uncooked processed food comprising asparagine, sugars, and less than 0.1 wt.% glucose to a fermenter containing an aqueous medium having a pH between about 4 and 8, the aqueous medium comprising

(i) a microorganism used for food fermentations for metabolizing sugars in the uncooked processed food,

(ii) yeast extract for fermentation by the microorganism,

- (iii) at least one of a food-grade acid or an alkali metal hydroxide;
- (b) fermenting the uncooked processed food in the aqueous medium which is agitated in the fermenter with the microorganism so as to ferment the sugars in the uncooked processed food sufficiently to reduce the acrylamide production upon cooking of the uncooked processed food; and
- (c) baking or frying the uncooked processed food, thereby forming a fermented and cooked food that contains less acrylamide than without the fermentation;

wherein no sugars are added to the processed food through steps (a) to (c).

30. (New) The process of Claim 29 wherein the uncooked processed food added in step (a) comprises less than 0.1 wt.% fructose.

31. (New) The process of Claim 29 wherein the uncooked processed food added in step (a) comprises each of fructose, glucose, sucrose, maltose, and lactose at levels less than 0.1 wt.%.